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BALTIMORE MAN INDICTED IN FOREIGN SEX TRAVEL CASE

Baltimore, Maryland – Attorney General John Ashcroft, Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge, and United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Thomas M. DiBiagio announced today the unsealing of a ten count indictment charging Richard Arthur Schmidt, age 61, of Baltimore, Maryland with multiple offenses involving the sexual molestation of minor teenage boys in the Philippines and Cambodia.

According to the Affidavit in Support of Application For Arrest Warrant and Criminal Complaint previously filed against Schmidt in federal court in Baltimore, Maryland on January 13, 2004 (the “Affidavit”), Schmidt, who is on parole in the State of Maryland, has been convicted in Maryland state courts of crimes relating to the sexual molestation of minor teenage boys on three previous occasions. Most recently, according to the Affidavit, Schmidt was sentenced in 1987 in the Circuit Court of Baltimore City to serve 18 years in prison as a result of multiple convictions of third degree sexual offenses, all of which stemmed from Schmidt’s sexual involvement with local Maryland boys. In 2000, Schmidt was released on parole by Maryland authorities after serving 13 years of his 18 year sentence.

In May 2002, Maryland parole authorities issued an arrest warrant for Schmidt after receiving information that Schmidt had been associating with a minor male in violation of the terms of his parole. Schmidt promptly left Maryland and flew to the Philippines, arriving there in the first week of June 2002.

According to the Affidavit, in December 2003 a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”) agent based in the Bangkok, Thailand learned that Schmidt had been arrested and charged in the Philippines and separately in Cambodia with offenses relating to the sexual molestation of young boys in both countries. Schmidt had been released when first charged in Cambodia with sexually molesting two boys – a few days later he was arrested again after being charged by the Cambodian National Police with sexually assaulting a third Cambodian boy.

On February 5, 2004 a federal grand jury in the District of Maryland charged Schmidt in a sealed 10 count indictment with numerous offenses relating to the sexual exploitation of minor boys in the Philippines and Cambodia. The indictment charges Schmidt with numerous violations of a new federal law which makes it a crime for U.S. citizens to engage in illicit sexual conduct with minors beyond the territorial limits of the United States. The offenses are described in greater detail in the Affidavit.

“Sexual predators who think they can travel overseas to escape justice in this country are sadly mistaken,” said Attorney General John Ashcroft. “Our efforts to eradicate the exploitation and sexual abuse of children are global, and our determination to bring these alleged predators to justice remains stronger than ever.”

"Through a comprehensive initiative called Operation Predator, ICE is doing everything in its power to identify, investigate, and hold accountable child sex predators, both in the United States

and abroad," said Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge. "As this arrest demonstrates, international borders no longer shield child sex predators from the law."

If convicted, Schmidt faces a maximum sentence on each charge of 30 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The case is assigned to U.S. District Judge Andre M. Davis and no trial date has been set.

An indictment/complaint is not a finding of guilt. An individual charged by indictment is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings.

This case was investigated by the ICE, the United States Diplomatic Security Service of the Department of State, the Cambodian National Police and the Australian Federal Police, and will be prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrew Norman.